

# MOTIVATION AND BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEES AT THE WORKPLACE. MINI SOCIAL-COMMUNITY RESEARCH

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**Abstract:** *The following article addresses the issue of employee motivation in Romanian organizations, offering, based on the theoretical support of motivational theories, the results of a mini-research with a socio-community value (a sociological survey based on an online questionnaire applied to some employees in the fields of education, transport, IT&C, public administration). The sociological survey tracked the perception of employees in the surveyed fields regarding the benefits offered at work by the employer. Based on the answers, conclusions could be drawn regarding the main solution for motivating employees, represented by salary, but there are non-financial methods that contribute to motivating employees.*

**Keywords:** human resources; motivation; benefits; non-financial methods; salary

## 1. The Perception of Employee Motivation in Organization Management

From the point of view of the management of modern organizations, the human resource is regarded as one of the "essential investments, the human resource becoming a strategic resource for an economic agent", (Postolachi, 2015: 60-66). It is much more difficult and complex to manage than financial, informational, technical, etc. resources. It is essential and unique in the process of growth and development of an organization due to its potential and ability to know and overcome its own limits.

In this direction, motivation is treated as an important aspect within the article, an aspect related to the will of the human being to act in a certain way, it represents, in fact, "the intrinsic state of the employee, orienting and directing his behaviour by satisfying certain needs", (Gheorghita, Levinta-Perciun and Shundi, 2012: 45).

The motivation of the human factor for work represents an essential concept in human resources management, it consists in influencing the staff through certain factors, determining positive or negative actions in the fulfilment of work responsibilities.

To motivate the human resource in work means to reward, in monetary or non-monetary form, its contribution to the company's prosperity, such as effort, initiative and success.

In such cases, the main motivational factor provides differentiation in rewarding the human resource. Differentiation through financial rewards according to qualification, effectiveness and success is the most effective way to motivate the human resource. When in a company, the distribution of income is equal, the demotivating effect is born.

Therefore, the success or failure of the organization depends on how its employees act. To avoid failure, the manager must motivate his employees, involve them in the actions carried out, stimulate their creativity, capitalize on their skills and competences, know and satisfy their needs. In this way the manager will make them work well and use all their physical and intellectual resources.

Motivation leads to results and performance, this being a basic component of management, a topic often analysed and with various approaches in specialized works.

In the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, (1998: 571), motivation is defined as "the totality of reasons or motives (conscious or not) that cause someone to perform a certain action or to aim for certain goals". Thus, we understand that motivation is an accumulation of internal and external forces that generate and coordinate behaviours to achieve certain goals. Since these are achieved, they lead to the satisfaction of some needs.

It can be seen that, nowadays, within every organization, human resources management has gained particular importance, because it includes all managerial decisions and practices that directly influence the behaviour and quality of employees' work.

At the same time, the management of human resources consists of a complex set of activities related to the efficient use of the human capital in the organization, in order to achieve the objectives targeted by the organization. At the same time, it considers ensuring all the conditions necessary to satisfy the needs of employees, motivating them to be loyal to the organization in which they work.

In other words, human resources management aims at a strategic design related to the attraction, training, development, management, use and motivation of human resources, which can ensure success in achieving the proposed goals.

In the management plan, the main influences are observed in the design of the employee motivation system, the type of management used, respectively a management of individuals or one of groups, the organizational climate.

Being a complex process, the approach to employee motivation must be carried out differently, depending on each individual, their potential, needs and interests, their behaviour and ambitions, their readiness to assume new tasks and responsibilities.

The concept of motivation refers to the desire and willingness of the employee to get involved in the achievement of the organization's objectives, simultaneously with the satisfaction of their needs. This approach considers three important coordinates: the needs of the employee, the effort made by said employee and the objectives of the organization. Specialists "have not reached a consensus regarding creativity and its problematic, but it has become a targeted theme of management research", (Demyen and Ciurea, 2016: 906).

Motivating factors refer to the elements that cause a person to carry out various actions or adopt certain attitudes and behaviours. Motivation is the support of engaging the person in the race to achieve a result, having the satisfaction of achieving it.

Motivational factors are considered "tangible (motivating and competitive salary, financial rewards, bonuses, prizes, other material and financial benefits); intangibles (influence on decision-making, career development, job security, performance recognition and appreciation, advancements, involvement in new projects, telework)", Sodex (2019).

A good manager senses, in time, the important needs of employees and knows how to act, so as to motivate them accordingly. In this approach, one must consider the following premises:

- the structure of employees' needs depends on the individual particularities of development and the general standard of living;
- the formation of complex motivational models is achieved through the interaction between needs and motivations;
- good experiences within the organization generate new employee motivations;
- the individual may have diverse needs, in different contexts: the same organization, different groups or organizations;
- every need generates motivation, the employee acts until that need is satisfied;
- employees can respond differently to managerial strategies, depending on the motivating factors and personal qualities.

Motivation is a complex issue, being “difficult to accurately assess the trigger because each employee's needs are different in terms of nature, structure and length”, (Demyen and Lala-Popa, 2013: 233).

The content of motivation has the following motivational structures (Radu, 2009: 18-20):

- "needs/necessities - motivational structures of the personality, which do not always trigger action and which can be: primary (innate) needs, which ensure physical integrity and secondary needs (formed throughout life), which ensure the psychological and social integrity of the individual;
- the reasons – ensure the triggering of appropriate behaviours to satisfy some needs, which support and guide the action;
- interests - more complex than needs and reasons, consisting of selective orientations, established and relatively active towards certain fields of activity;
- convictions – ideas of value in the personality structure, strongly experienced on an affective level, which drive the individual to action;
- the ideals and conception of the world, based on own experiences and those of peers, influenced by culture and education".

According to the generating element, the forms of motivation are:

- positive motivation and negative motivation – the first consist of praise, encouragement, with beneficial effects on activities or interpersonal relationships, and the other uses threat, blame or punishment, associated with abstinence, avoidance, refusal;
- intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation - depending on the source that produces it, the first being linked to the needs of the individual and in solidarity with the work process, the other being imposed/suggested by another person, manifests itself through negative or positive emotional experiences (rejection, aversion due to demotion, dismissal, etc. or satisfaction due to promotion, acquiring a higher salary, etc.
- cognitive motivation and affective motivation - related to some immediate needs of the individual, the first acting from within cognitive processes and stimulating intellectual activity, and the other being determined by the individual's need to feel good next to and together with others.

The roles and effects of motivation can be synthetised as it follows:

- the managerial role consists in establishing the content and efficiency of the training function which has a decisive role in the realization of the other managerial functions, the quality of decisions, the operationalization of the strategies used and their effects, the information system and communication having a particular influence on the motivation of employees;
- the organizational role refers to the impact of motivation on the organization's functionality and performance;
- the individual role consists in motivating the organization to satisfy the needs of each employee;
- the economic role refers to the fact that employee motivation leads to economic results and performance;
- the social role means the effect of the previously presented social roles, of the social climate, of the social relations in the organization and not only that.

## **2. Basic theories in regard to employee motivation**

There are a large number of theories related to the field of motivation, trying to classify them according to different criteria. Among the specialists who developed original theories related to motivation, we list: F. W. Taylor (scientific management), Elton Mayo (theory of human relations), H. A. Murray (instrumentalist theories), A. H. Maslow (theory of the hierarchy of needs), B.F. Skinner (operant conditioning theory), Frederick Herzberg (bifactor theory),

Clayton Alderfer (Existence–Relationship–Development theory), V. H. Vroom (expectancy theory), J. S. Adams (equity theory), etc. The criterion classifications were considered subjective and, in this case, a chronological analysis of them was considered much more objective, since all the authors explained what motivates employees, avoiding saying why it occurs and how it can be preserved in time the motivation.

From the chronological point of view of motivational theories, we talk about "classic (traditional) theories and contemporary (modern) theories", (Radu, 2009: 29).

Out of the classic theories of motivation we can list:

- The classical (scientific) management theory of F. W. Taylor (1911) demonstrated that the payment that employees receive is the motivating factor for them.

- The theory of Hawthorne studies, developed by Elton Mayo as a result of experiments at a factory (1927-1932), which concluded that group membership, as well as its specific status, for employees is more important than financial incentives or conditions very good work offered.

- Theory X and Theory Y elaborated by Douglas McGregor (1960), the first linking motivational factors with concern for personal security, and the other employee motivation with self-actualization.

- The theory of the hierarchy of needs developed by Abraham Maslow (1954) according to which man constantly tries to satisfy his various needs, based on a certain hierarchy of their importance, currently known as the pyramid of needs: physiological needs (food, water, shelter, clothing, rest, etc.); safety needs (personal physical and emotional security: secure job, health insurance, insurance of a pension and safe working conditions); social needs (group membership, social and family relationships); esteem needs (respect and social recognition); self-realization needs (utilizing one's own potential).

- The theory of the two factors (bifactorial) was defined by Frederick Herzberg (1966), showing that employees are influenced by: extrinsic factors (dissatisfaction or hygiene) and intrinsic factors (satisfaction);

- The Existence - Relationship - Development (ERD) theory was designed by Clayton Alderfer, starting from Maslow's classification of needs and highlighting three categories of individual needs that must be gradually satisfied: existence (E), relationship (R), and of development (D).

Modern theories of motivation are the following:

- Equity theory belongs to J.S. Adam (1964) where motivation is seen as the result of a process in which a person compares himself with others, based on the effect-effort ratio, abandoning the simple stringing of motivational factors.

- The theory of expectation (hope), developed by Victor Vroom (1964), without explicitly specifying the generating factors, shows that motivation is an extensive process in which each individual studies the chances of obtaining some results and to what extent they are attractive to him.

- The theory of reinforcement or consolidation, developed by B. F. Skinner (1953), which, beyond the review of motivating factors, shows that it is a complex process that takes into account different situations, requiring different solutions.

These motivational theories suggest that performance is the result of the following sets of factors:

- the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the individual, combined in such a way as to lead to the desired results;

- the attitudes, motives, needs and expectations that each individual appeals to when he chooses a certain behaviour.

Most organizations "try to build an intelligent framework and a motivating and intense quality system from which to develop their goals and strategies", (Bretcu and Demyen, 2018: 402).

Consequently, motivation springs from acting on these sets of factors. The organization must help individuals to continuously enrich their knowledge and capabilities, and leaders must be able to motivate them, meet the needs of the employees in the organization in order to obtain the desired behaviour from them.

### **3. The methodology of empirical research on the perception of employees' motivation and benefits at work**

Starting from theoretical elements related to employee motivation, with the help of the methodological approach carried out, we offer an overall perspective on the perception that employees in Romania have in regard to the benefits received at the workplace, emphasizing the importance of motivating the human resource, revealing the reality on the ground of work and indicating elements proposed by employees that contribute to their motivation.

For a good development of the methodological approach, it is important to address, in support of the empirical research, two thematic research questions:

1. Are Romanian employers involved in the employee motivation process?
2. Are the benefits offered by the employer sufficient for the employee?

The research questions are focused on outlining a reality that can show us the effectiveness of human resource motivation strategies within Romanian organizations and how they are perceived by employees.

The methodological approach with the help of which we will find answers to the research questions addressed, aims to validate (or not) the following hypothesis: The perception of employees in Romania regarding the benefits offered by the employer is positive.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The methodological approach is based on quantitative research. The use of the sociological survey based on the questionnaire will help us to provide data, in a quantitative manner, about the perception of employees in Romania regarding the benefits offered at the workplace by the employer.

Sociological survey based on online questionnaire was used because in this way more data could be obtained about the researched topic, the data obtained was collected more quickly due to the ease of spreading and interpreting the questionnaire. We also took into account the fact that, through self-administration, subjects can express themselves better when answering the questions raised.

On the subject of sample used to conduct the sociological survey, it was a random one of convenience. The questionnaire includes 21 items and was applied online on the Facebook platform, in groups with different topics, as well as among contacts, on the WhatsApp platform. Although the target group is not well defined, the intention of the questionnaire was to collect information from people with different degrees of professionalization and education, as well as different ages. The purpose of the sociological survey was communicated to each participant before completing the online questionnaire. Also, the participants were informed that the answers will be anonymous.

The total sample that participated in the questionnaire consisted of 55 subjects.

They were distributed socio-demographically as it follows: women – 61.8%, men – 32.7%, and 5.5% preferred not to declare.

Additionally, regarding the socio-demographic distribution, we observe a dominance among the age of the respondents: 45.5% of them are between 46 and 55 years old. Another relevant index is the fact that 18.2% of the subjects are between 26 and 35 years old, and 14.5% are under 25 years old.

The result of this item in the questionnaire is important and emphasizes the work experience of the subjects which, correlated and viewed holistically with the other questions in

the questionnaire, will provide us with information both about how the employer motivates its human resources, but also about the expectations that employees have from the employer.

More than 90% of the subjects of the sociological survey work for an employer whose residence is in the urban environment.

The employer's sector of activity represents another important aspect, and this is because it provides us with information about the main fields in which the employees work. We observe how most subjects work in key areas for society. 23.6% of them work in the field of education and to an equal extent, a similar percentage works in the field of transport, another fundamental field of the 21st century society. A field that experienced rapid development and became a pillar of the labour field is IT&C, with 9.1% of respondents working in this sector. A small part of them, but relevant for research, work in fields such as pharmaceuticals, public administration.

It is important to understand to what extent the subjects of the sociological survey are satisfied with the benefits at the workplace, if they knew at the time of employment the benefits offered by the employer and which are the benefits to which the respondents attach high importance.

We thus find that 54.5% of the subjects are satisfied to a moderate extent with the benefits granted at the workplace, while 27.3% to a great extent, and only two of them are not satisfied at all. At the same time, 7.3% are very satisfied with the benefits provided by the employer, and 7.3% to a small extent. The answers to this question, related to the level of satisfaction regarding the benefits granted at the workplace, indicate that there is a consistency, a moderate way in which the benefits granted by employers in Romania satisfy the employees.

Among the benefits granted by employers in Romania, we mention meal vouchers, amounts for telecommuting, gifts in money or in kind offered on special occasions such as public holidays or anniversaries, transportation to and from the workplace. We even find benefits such as medical service subscriptions, gym memberships, fruit giveaways and even financial advice. The latter benefits are implemented later than the other benefits that fall under a traditionalist note and are known by employees to a greater extent.

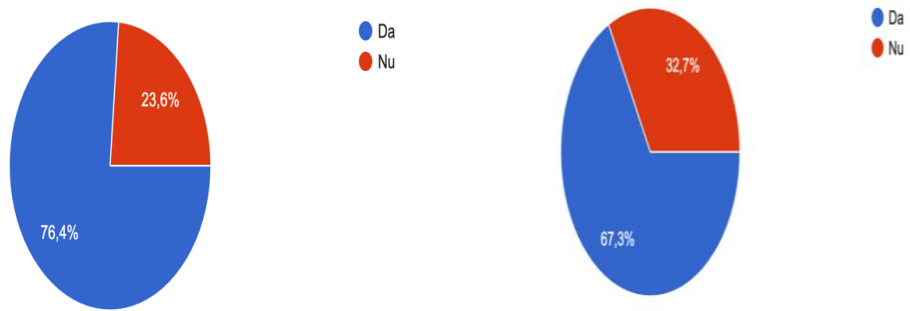
To a large extent and to a very large extent, employees in Romania give importance to meal vouchers, gifts in money or in kind offered on holidays or anniversaries and transportation to and from the workplace. Equally important for employees is the subscription for medical services. They give little or no importance to the fruit bar and the amounts offered for telecommuting, as well as other types of memberships such as the gym membership.

Regarding the work system implemented by the employers, in a majority proportion, the employees work from the office, only 12.7% of them being offered by the employer a telework system. We understand in this way why the importance given to this benefit is low or non-existent. Around 22.5% of the employees work in a mixed system.

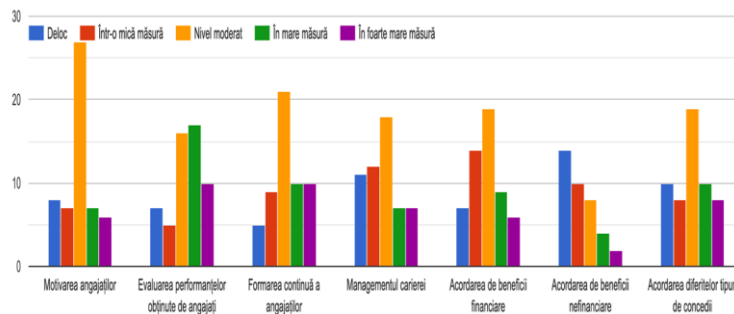
In this regard, 67.3% of the subjects feel motivated at work by their bosses, while 32.7% do not. The results of these two questions give us an insight into the involvement of the employer not only in terms of the comfort of the human resource, but also of his involvement in the good progress of his company.

We graphically reproduce the results for questions 2 and 3 of the questionnaire: At the time of employment, were you informed about all the benefits offered by the employer? (Graph on the left) and Do you feel that you are motivated at work by your bosses? (Graphic on the right):

**Figure 1: Informing and motivation of employees**



**Figure 2: Attention provided by the employer to aspects regarding the employee**



In order to perform well, it is necessary to give the employee what motivates him. In the lines above, we noticed that the employer pays attention to financial benefits more than non-financial benefits (which are translated into appreciation, relaxing work environment, inspiration, recognition, etc.). Correlating the answer to the question whose graph is presented in figure 3.2. with the answers to the question *What would motivate you to perform better?* we understand that the reality of the employer is not the same as that of the employee.

The question *What would motivate you to perform better?* is open-ended, and in a summary way, the majority of the subjects' answers refer to recognition of merits, relaxing work environment, constructive feedback, patience from a boss whom they wish to be, in fact, a leader.

Therefore, while there is an increased interest in financial benefits from employees, it is equally important for them to be offered non-financial benefits in the form of rewards. This way of rewarding has an effect on the employee's well-being and will motivate him.

#### 4. Conclusions

The theoretical approach showed us that an important component of employee motivation represents the benefits that employees have at work. Although the main motivation solution is the salary, there are non-financial methods that contribute to the motivation of employees and which, as we have seen in the answers to the questions in the questionnaire, are,

if not more important, equally important for the employee (meal vouchers, gifts in money or in kind offered on holidays or anniversaries, transport to and from the workplace, subscription for medical services). With the help of these rewarding methods, the employee feels appreciated and thus his intrinsic motivation increases, identifying himself and wanting to contribute to the success of the organization he works for.

Therefore, the answer to this question is positive. Employers in Romania are involved in the process of motivating employees. Both in the motivation process and in the evaluation process, employers make an effort to drive the organization towards performance.

The second research question addressed is whether the *benefits offered by the employer are sufficient for the employee*. Between the employee and the employer, it is imperative that there be a balance and constancy.

Therefore, the answer to the second research question is negative. The results collected with the help of the questionnaire showed us that employers in Romania use financial methods to motivate employees, while employees need more than a good salary. Rewarding performance through specific events, promotions, awarding diplomas of excellence, symbolic gifts, awards, interim in key positions are rather appreciated by employees, and they must have a repetitive character.

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